



Office of The Attorney General
State of Connecticut

*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 16, 2009*

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 1078, An Act Establishing a Bi-State Long Island Sound Commission.

The proposed New York- Connecticut commission would not replace existing state and federal licensing and regulatory bodies, but would review ways that both states can work proactively to address shared needs for new renewable energy sources and to protect the Long Island Sound from environmental harm. There has been positive initial reaction from New York officials.

Connecticut's victories over Broadwater and Islander East underscore the need for joint Connecticut-New York proactive action related to environmental and energy needs. Our two states are tightly bound by historic opportunity and necessity. Long Island Sound binds our two states irrevocably, provides billions of dollars in economic and other benefits, and must be a shared commitment. Burdens and benefits must be shared equally. A joint commission between Connecticut and New York -- representing businesses, ordinary citizens, environmental groups, commercial and recreational users of the Sound, utility regulators, and consumer advocates -- can be an effective forum for cooperation.

A positive shared strategy is essential. Simply and solely reacting or rejecting is not effective public policy. Joining together both sides of the Sound, this commission can work to develop a regional consensus that serves both environmental protection and energy needs.

Specifically, the proposed commission would consider:

- designating areas of Long Island Sound that must be protected from all development -- perhaps through a new federal or multi-state marine park.
- reviewing ways in which our states can work jointly to support new renewable sources of energy.
- additional new ways to encourage energy efficiency and conservation to reduce oil reliance.
- jointly supporting liquefied gas facilities -- alternatives to Broadwater off the New York or New Jersey coasts -- that help meet the energy needs of our region with this relatively clean energy source.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 1078.